

COUNTRY Korea

SUBJECT Agricultural Developments in North Korea

PLACE
ACQUIRED

DATE OF
INFO.

CONFIDENTIAL

DATE DISTR 11 SEP 50

NO. OF PAGES 2

NO. OF ENCLS.
(LISTED BELOW)

SUPPLEMENT TO
REPORT NO.

25X1X

1. In March 1950, the North Korean authorities were beginning to make a change in their land distribution program. The expropriation and redistribution of land which immediately followed the war and continued into 1947 did not turn out as was expected, since the old landlords, many of whom were hard working practical farmers, were able to produce more than the new workers who took up the free land. The decreased agricultural production led the government in March 1950 to announce that landlords who had been expelled might receive land to cultivate if they would return home by 31 March. A number of farmers did return.*
2. At the beginning of March, the Central Committee of the Democratic Front ordered the Democratic Youth Party, the Women's League, and the Farmers' Union to form a new farm group, using their farming members as a nucleus. All farmers were called in and organized under the direction of the three parties, with their members serving as leaders. The new Farming Group is divided into sections for plowing, sowing, fertilizing, and cultivating, and farm work is supposed to be carried out collectively by the appropriate section for the season and the situation. Individual farm work is strictly prohibited. A farmer who is absent from work because of urgent family affairs is reprimanded severely the first time and is required to examine himself in the presence of the rest of the group as to how he has deterred the group work. Farmers who are absent repeatedly are subject to various punishments such as banishment.
3. The establishment of farmers' markets on 5 March 1950, the fourth anniversary of land reform, turned out to be no great change in the existing situation. The eight markets which were opened are small in size and similar in function to the regular commercial markets already in operation. The eight, in order of their establishment, concluding at the beginning of April, are Pyongyang, Sinuiju (126-24, 40-06), Wonsan (127-26, 39-10), Hamhung (127-32, 39-54), Hungnam (127-33, 39-52), Chongjin (129-49, 41-46), Kungye (126-36, 40-53), and Beaju (125-42, 38-02).

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Approved For Release 2001/04/01 : CIA-RDP82-00457R0005700380013-

Document No. 013
No Change in Class. ☐
☒ Declassified
Class. Changed To: TS S C
Auth: HR 70-2 105

2

25X1A * [REDACTED] Comment: The North Korean authorities capitalized on the return of some landlords by announcing that the returnees were persons who had fled earlier to South Korea but had been unable to endure the regime there.

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